

**REMARKS**

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

By way of this Amendment, Claims 9-17 and 21-23 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein. Applicants reserve the right to file a divisional application directed to the method recited in Claims 21-23.

In light of the cancellation of Claims 9-17 and 21-23, the only claims currently pending in this application are Claims 1-8 and 18-20, with Claims 1 and 18 being the only independent claims.

Independent Claim 1 is directed to a composite seal that is insertable between two relatively rotating members to seal a cavity between such members in a fluidtight manner. The seal comprises a support for connection to one of the members, and a flexible sealing element carried integrally by the support and comprising at least one annular sealing lip cooperating in sliding contact with a sealing surface of the other member. The annular sealing lip of the flexible sealing element is substantially in the form of a cylindrical sleeve defined by a first lateral surface cooperating in use with the sealing surface of the second member and a second lateral surface opposite the first lateral surface. In addition, an annular pressure element made of an elastomer is carried by the annular sealing lip on the second lateral surface of the annular sealing lip. Further, a radial toroidal pressure spring is carried by the annular pressure element and is inserted in an annular seat formed in the annular pressure element on the opposite side to the annular sealing lip.

The Official Action sets forth an anticipatory rejection of independent Claim 1 based on the disclosure contained in German Offenlegungsschrift No. 35 27 991 to *Mondon*. To more clearly highlight differences between the composite seal of the present invention and the disclosure contained in *Mondon*, Claim 1 has been amended to define that the pressure element is mechanically connected to the annular sealing lip other than by way of the pressure spring. This mechanical connection assists in avoiding the need for providing an element to axially block the pressure element. In *Mondon*, it is necessary to provide the downwardly extending element to the left of the rubber ring 3 for purposes of axially blocking the rubber element 3. This increases the cost of the sealing assembly and contributes to a more complex and costly assembly of the sealing ring.

The claimed mechanical connection of the pressure element and the annular sealing lip was previously recited in Claim 3. The most recent Official Action addressed this claimed aspect of the invention by noting that the spring 4 disclosed in *Mondon* provides a mechanical connection between the rubber ring 3 and the sealing sleeve 7. While it might be said that the spring presses the rubber ring 3 against the sealing sleeve 7, the spring does not provide a mechanical connection between the rubber ring 3 and the sealing sleeve 7. Further, there is no apparent disclosure in *Mondon* that the rubber ring 3 is mechanically connected to the sealing sleeve 7 other than by way of the spring 4 as now recited in Claim 1.

Claim 1 has also been amended to recite that the support is substantially L-shaped and comprises a flange portion and a sleeve-shaped portion substantially coaxial with the

sleeve-shaped annular sealing lip, with the sleeve-shaped portion having one end connected to the flange portion and an opposite free end. In addition, Claim 1 now recites that the annular sealing lip extends axially to a length greater than the axial extent of the free end of the sleeve-shaped portion of the support. As mentioned in the prior response and as discussed at the end of the application, this arrangement helps facilitate correct and easy assembly of the seal.

This claimed relationship between the axial extent of the annular sealing lip and the axial extent of the sleeve-shaped portion of the support was previously recited in independent Claim 9, and the Official Action addressed this claimed aspect of the invention by commenting that *Mondon* discloses the claimed relationship. However, that is clearly not the case. Indeed, Fig. 2 of *Mondon* discloses just the opposite in that the axial extent of the seal sleeve 7 underlying the rubber ring 3 is less than the axial extension of the end of the sleeve shaped portion of the support 2.

In the event the Examiner continues to believe that *Mondon* discloses this claimed aspect of the present invention, the Examiner is kindly asked to provide an appropriate explanation to facilitate a better understanding of the Examiner's position.

For at least the reasons set forth above, it is respectfully submitted that the claimed composite seal recited in independent Claim 1, and the various dependent claims, is patentable distinguishable over the disclosure contained in *Mondon*.

Independent Claim 18 has also been amended to more clearly distinguish the claimed composite seal over the disclosure contained in *Mondon* by reciting, in a manner

similar to Claim 1, that the support is substantially L-shaped and comprises a flange portion and a sleeve-shaped portion substantially coaxial with the sealing lip, with the sleeve-shaped portion having one end connected to the flange portion and an opposite free end, and with the annular sealing lip extending axially to a length greater than the axial extension of the free end of the sleeve-shaped portion of the support. As discussed above in connection with independent Claim 1, *Mondon* does not disclose such an arrangement, and in fact discloses just the opposite.

It is thus respectfully submitted that the claimed composite seal recited in independent Claim 18, and the various dependent claims, is also patentably distinguishable over the disclosure contained in *Mondon*.

Early and favorable action with respect to this application is respectfully requested.

Should any questions arise in connection with this application or should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference with the undersigned would be helpful in resolving any remaining issues pertaining to this application, the undersigned respectfully requests that he be contacted at the number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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